

## United States Senate

July 12, 2018

COMMITTEES:

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
FINANCE  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SMALL BUSINESS

COMMISSION ON SECURITY  
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Ahead of your summit with Russian president Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland, I write to urge you to review the summary and key recommendations of a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report I commissioned six months ago documenting Putin's pattern of asymmetric warfare against democratic institutions, universal values, and the rule of law in Russia and across Europe over the last twenty years.

I strongly urge your administration to adopt these reforms to build our own defenses against this growing threat posed by the Kremlin. I have enclosed a copy of the preface, summary, and key recommendations.

*Putin's Asymmetrical Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security* details the tools the Russian government has repeatedly deployed from its asymmetric arsenal, and how the Kremlin has learned and perfected its techniques attacking democracy both internally and abroad. Such tools include military incursions, cyberattacks, disinformation, support for fringe political groups, and the weaponization of energy resources, organized crime and corruption.

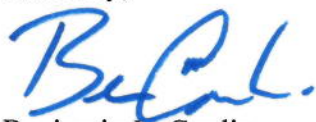
Mr. Putin's increasing aggression abroad – including his meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election documented by our Intelligence Committee and recently affirmed by the bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee – is directly related to his need to maintain power at home. And as he looks to strengthen and further consolidate his power in Russia, comfortable in his fraudulent reelection earlier this year, Mr. Putin is likely to step up his attacks on democracies around the world, with eyes toward the 2018 and 2020 U.S. elections.

After years of Kremlin efforts to erode their democracies, some European countries have shored up their defenses with strategic, whole-of-government approaches: publicly warning Moscow of consequences if it meddles; mobilizing various sectors of society to neutralize and push back against Kremlin disinformation; and confronting Russian efforts to use corruption as a tool of influence.

It is time for the United States to take similar actions, under your leadership, and the report recommends policy options ranging from exposing and freezing Kremlin-linked dirty money, to identifying and countering State Hybrid Threat Actors, to better understanding cyberattacks and possibly considering them in the context of NATO's Article 5 collective defense provision.

It was in Helsinki 43 years ago that the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Soviet Union formalized the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and committed to a number of democratic, security, and economic principles. Amidst this historic context and in the face of the growing threat from the Kremlin, the Helsinki Summit provides you a fresh opportunity to turn the page on appeasing Mr. Putin and start admonishing him for his repeated, insidious attacks against everything our country fought to create out of the ashes of the Second World War.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

Enclosure: Preface, Executive Summary and Key Recommendations from *Putin's Asymmetrical Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security*.